

Final Protocol to the Universal Postal Convention

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Universal Postal Convention

The undersigned, plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the member countries of the Union, having regard to article 22, paragraph 3, of the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have by common consent and subject to article 25, paragraph 4, of the Constitution drawn up in this Convention the rules applicable in common throughout the international postal service and the provisions concerning the letter-post services.

Part I

Rules applicable in common throughout the international postal service

Sole chapter

General provisions

Article 1

Freedom of transit

1 The principle of the freedom of transit is set forth in article 1 of the Constitution. It shall carry with it the obligation for each postal administration to forward always by the quickest routes and the most secure means which it uses for its own items, closed mails and à découvert letter-post items which are passed to it by another administration.

2 Member countries which do not participate in the exchange of letters containing perishable biological substances or radioactive substances shall have the option of not admitting these items in transit à découvert through their territory. The same shall apply to letter-post items, other than letters, postcards and literature for the blind which do not satisfy the legal requirements governing the conditions of their publication or circulation in the country crossed.

3 Freedom of transit for postal parcels to be forwarded by land and sea routes shall be limited to the territory of the countries taking part in this service.

4 Freedom of transit for air parcels shall be guaranteed throughout the territory of the Union. However, member countries which are not parties to the Postal Parcels Agreement shall not be required to forward air parcels by surface.

5 If a member country fails to observe the provisions regarding freedom of transit, other member countries may discontinue their postal service with that country.

Article 2

Ownership of postal items

1 A postal item shall remain the property of the sender until it is delivered to the rightful owner, except when the item has been seized in pursuance of the legislation of the country of destination.

Article 3

Creation of new service

1 Administrations may by mutual consent create a new service not expressly provided for in the Acts of the Union. Charges for a new service shall be laid down by each administration concerned, having regard to the expenses of operating the service.

Article 4

Monetary unit

1 The monetary unit laid down in article 7 of the Constitution and used in the Convention and the Agreements as well as in their Detailed Regulations shall be the Special Drawing Right (SDR).

Article 5

Postage stamps

1 Only postal administrations shall issue postage stamps attesting payment of postage according to the Acts of the Union. Postal prepayment impressions, franking machine impressions and impressions made by a printing press or other printing or stamping process in accordance with the provisions of the Detailed Regulations may be used only with the authorization of the postal administration.

2 The subjects and designs of postage stamps shall be in keeping with the spirit of the Preamble to the UPU Constitution and of decisions taken by the Union's bodies.

Article 6

Charges

1 The charges for the various international postal services shall be laid down in the Convention and the Agreements. The charges shall in principle be related to the costs of providing these services.

2 The charges collected, including those laid down for guideline purposes in the Acts, shall be at least equal to those collected on internal service items presenting the same characteristics (category, quantity, handling time, etc).

3 Postal administrations shall be authorized to exceed any charges appearing in the Convention and the Agreements, including those laid down for guideline purposes:

3.1 if the charges they collect for the same services in their internal service are higher than the ones laid down;

3.2 if this is necessary to cover the costs of operating their services or on any other reasonable grounds.

4 No postal charge of any kind may be collected from customers other than those provided for in the Convention and Agreements.

5 Except where otherwise provided by the Convention and the Agreements, each postal administration shall retain the charges which it has collected.

Article 7

Exemption from postal charges

1 Principle

1.1 Cases of exemption from postal charges shall be expressly laid down by the Convention and the Agreements.

2 Postal service

2.1 Letter-post items relating to the postal service sent by postal administrations or their offices shall be exempt from all postal charges.

2.2 Letter-post items relating to the postal service shall be exempt from all postal charges, with the exception of air surcharges, if they are:

2.2.1 exchanged between bodies of the Universal Postal Union and bodies of the Restricted Unions;

2.2.2 exchanged between bodies of those Unions;

2.2.3 sent by such bodies to postal administrations or their offices.

3 Prisoners of war and civilian internees

3.1 Letter-post items, postal parcels and postal financial services items addressed to or sent by prisoners of war, either direct or through the offices mentioned in the Detailed Regulations, shall be exempt from all postal charges, with the exception of air surcharges. Belligerents apprehended and interned in a neutral country shall be classed with prisoners of war proper so far as the application of the foregoing provisions is concerned.

3.2 The provisions set out under 3.1 shall also apply to letter-post items, postal parcels and postal financial services items originating in other countries and addressed to or sent by civilian internees as defined by the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war, either direct or through the offices mentioned in the Detailed Regulations.

3.3 The offices mentioned in the Detailed Regulations shall also enjoy exemption from postal charges in respect of letter-post items, postal parcels and postal financial services items which concern the persons referred to under 3.1 and 3.2, which they send or receive, either direct or as intermediaries.

3.4 Parcels shall be admitted free of postage up to a weight of 5 kilogrammes. The weight limit shall be increased to 10 kilogrammes in the case of parcels the contents of which cannot be split up and of parcels addressed to a camp or the prisoners' representatives there (*"hommes de confiance"*) for distribution to the prisoners.

4 Literature for the blind

4.1 Literature for the blind shall be exempt from all postal charges, with the exception of air surcharges.

Part II

Provisions concerning the letter post: Provision of services

Chapter 1

Basic services

Article 8

Letter-post items

1 Letter-post items shall be classified according to one of the following two systems. Every postal administration shall be free to choose the system that it applies to its outward traffic.

2 The first system shall be based on the speed of treatment of the items. The latter shall therefore be divided into:

2.1 priority items, ie items conveyed by the quickest route (air or surface) with priority; weight limits: 2 kilogrammes in general, 5 kilogrammes for items containing books and pamphlets (optional service), 7 kilogrammes for literature for the blind;

2.2 non-priority items, ie items for which the sender has chosen a lower rate, implying a longer delivery time; weight limits: same as those in 2.1.

3 The second system shall be based on the contents of the items. The latter shall therefore be divided into:

3.1 letters and postcards, together called "LC"; weight limit: 2 kilogrammes;

3.2 printed papers, literature for the blind and small packets together called "AO"; weight limits: 2 kilogrammes for small packets, 5 kilogrammes for printed papers, 7 kilogrammes for literature for the blind.

4 In the classification system based on contents:

4.1 letter-post items conveyed by air with priority shall be called "airmail items";

4.2 surface items conveyed by air with reduced priority shall be called "S.A.L. items".

5 Every administration may admit priority items and airmail items consisting of a sheet of paper suitably folded and gummed on all sides. Such items shall be called "aerogrammes".

6 Mail consisting of letter-post items posted in bulk by the same sender and received in the same dispatch or in separate dispatches, in accordance with the conditions specified in the Detailed Regulations, shall be called "bulk mail".

7 Special bags containing newspapers, periodicals, books and other printed papers for the same addressee at the same address shall, in both systems, be called "M bags"; weight limit: 30 kilogrammes.

8 The limits of size and the conditions of admission, as well as particulars regarding the limits of weight, are laid down in the Detailed Regulations.

Article 9

Postage charges

1 The administration of origin shall fix the postage charges for the conveyance of letter-post items throughout the entire extent of the Union. The postage charges shall cover delivery of the items to the place of address provided that this delivery service is operated in the country of destination for the items in question. The conditions of application are laid down in the Detailed Regulations.

2 Guideline postage charges are given in the table below:

Items	Weight step	Guideline charges
1	2	3
		SDR

2.1 Charges in the system based on speed:

Priority items	up to 20 g	0.37
	above 20 g up to 100 g	0.88
	above 100 g up to 250 g	1.76
	above 250 g up to 500 g	3.38
	above 500 g up to 1000 g	5.88
	above 1000 g up to 2000 g	9.56
	per additional step of 1000 g	4.78 (optional)
Non-priority items	up to 20 g	0.18
	above 20 g up to 100 g	0.40
	above 100 g up to 250 g	0.74
	above 250 g up to 500 g	1.32
	above 500 g up to 1000 g	2.21
	above 1000 g up to 2000 g	3.09
	per additional step of 1000 g	1.54 (optional)

2.2 Charges in the system based on contents:

Letters	up to 20 g	0.37
	above 20 g up to 100 g	0.88
	above 100 g up to 250 g	1.76
	above 250 g up to 500 g	3.38
	above 500 g up to 1000 g	5.88
	above 1000 g up to 2000 g	9.56
Postcards		0.26
Printed papers	up to 20 g	0.18
	above 20 g up to 100 g	0.40
	above 100 g up to 250 g	0.74
	above 250 g up to 500 g	1.32
	above 500 g up to 1000 g	2.21
	above 1000 g up to 2000 g	3.09
	per additional step of 1000 g	1.54

Items	Weight step	Guideline charges
1	2	3
		SDR
Small packets	above 20 g up to 100 g	0.40
	above 100 g up to 250 g	0.74
	above 250 g up to 500 g	1.32
	above 500 g up to 1000 g	2.21
	above 1000 g up to 2000 g	3.09

3 The Postal Operations Council shall be authorized to revise and to amend, subject to Council of Administration approval, the guideline charges given under 2 between two Congresses. The revised charges shall be based on the median value of the charges fixed by the members of the Union for international items from their countries.

4 The administration of origin may allow, for letter-post items containing:

4.1 newspapers and periodicals published in its country, a reduction of not more than 50 percent of the tariff applicable to the category of items used;

4.2 books and pamphlets, music scores and maps, provided they contain no publicity matter or advertisement other than that appearing on the cover or the fly leaves, the same reduction as that provided for under 4.1.

5 The charge applicable to M bags shall be calculated by weight steps of 1 kilogramme up to the total weight of each bag. The administration of origin may allow a reduction for such bags of up to 20 percent of the charge payable for the category of item used. This reduction may be independent of the reduction provided for under 4.

6 The administration of origin may apply to non-standardized items charges different from those applicable to standardized items. Standardized items are defined in the Detailed Regulations.

7 In the system based on contents, the combining in one item of articles on which different charges are payable shall be authorized on condition that the total weight does not exceed the maximum weight of the category whose weight limit is the highest. The charge applicable on such an item shall, at the option of the originating administration, be that of the category with the highest rate or the sum of the separate charges applicable to each article in the item. Such items shall bear the endorsement "Envois mixtes" ("Combination mailing").

Article 10

Rate-fixing based on method of conveyance or speed

1 The charges applicable to priority items, which shall always be conveyed by the quickest route (air or surface), shall include any additional costs of fast transmission.

2 Administrations that apply the system based on contents shall be authorized:

2.1 to collect air surcharges for airmail items. The surcharges shall be related to the air conveyance dues and shall be uniform for at least the whole of the territory of each country of destination whatever the route used. In calculating the air surcharge for an airmail item, administrations shall be authorized to take into account the weight of any forms used by the public which may be attached to the item;

- 2.2 to collect for S.A.L. items surcharges lower than those which they collect for airmail items;
- 2.3 to fix combined charges for the prepayment of airmail items and S.A.L. items, taking into account the cost of the postal services rendered by them and the cost of the air conveyance.
- 3 The reductions in charges pursuant to articles 9.4 and 9.5 shall also apply to items conveyed by air, but no reduction shall be granted on the portion of the charge intended to cover the costs of such conveyance.

Article 11
Preferential rates

- 1 Above the minimum level of charges laid down in article 6.2, postal administrations may allow reduced charges based on their internal legislation for letter-post items posted in their country. They may, for instance, give preferential rates to major users of the Post.

Article 12
Special charges

- 1 No delivery charge may be collected from the addressee in respect of small packets weighing less than 500 grammes.
- 2 Where domestic small packet items weighing over 500 grammes are subject to a delivery charge, the same charge may be collected in respect of incoming international small packets.
- 3 Administrations shall be authorized to collect in the cases mentioned below the same charges as in the domestic service.
 - 3.1 Charge on items posted after the latest time for posting, collected from the sender.
 - 3.2 Charge on items posted outside normal counter opening hours, collected from the sender.
 - 3.3 Charge for collection at the sender's address, collected from the sender.
 - 3.4 Charge, for withdrawal outside normal counter opening hours, collected from the addressee.
 - 3.5 Poste restante charge collected from the addressee.
 - 3.6 A storage charge for any letter-post item weighing more than 500 grammes of which the addressee has not taken delivery within the period during which the item is held at his disposal free of charge. This charge shall not apply to literature for the blind.

Article 13
Payment of postage

- 1 As a general rule, letter-post items shall be fully prepaid by the sender. The methods of denoting prepayment are defined in the Detailed Regulations.
- 2 The administration of origin may return unpaid or underpaid letter-post items to the sender for the latter to make up the postage himself.

3 The administration of origin may also itself undertake to prepay unpaid letter-post items or make up the postage on underpaid items and collect the missing amount from the sender. In this case, it shall be authorized to also collect a handling charge of 0.33 SDR at most. The missing prepayment shall be denoted by one of the methods defined in the Detailed Regulations.

4 In cases in which the options described under 2 and 3 are not applied, unpaid or underpaid items shall be liable to a special charge, payable by the addressee or, in the case of returned items, by the sender. Calculation of this special charge is defined in the Detailed Regulations.

Article 14

Prepayment of letter-post items on board ship

1 Items posted on board ship at the two terminal points of the voyage or at any intermediate port of call shall be prepaid by means of postage stamps and according to the rates of the country in whose waters the ship is lying.

2 If the items are posted on board on the high seas, they may be prepaid, in the absence of special agreement between the administrations concerned, by means of the postage stamps and according to the rates of the country to which the ship appertains or is under contract. Items prepaid in this way must be handed over to the post office at the port of call as soon as possible after the arrival of the ship.

Article 15

International reply coupons

1 Postal administrations shall be permitted to sell international reply coupons issued by the International Bureau and to limit their sale in accordance with their internal legislation.

2 The value of the reply coupon shall be 0.74 SDR. The selling price fixed by the administrations concerned may not be less than this value.

3 Reply coupons shall be exchangeable in any member country for one or more postage stamps representing the minimum postage prepayable **on an unregistered priority item or an unregistered airmail letter sent abroad**. Where not precluded by the internal legislation of the country of exchange, reply coupons shall also be exchangeable for postal stationery or for other postal prepayment marks or impressions.

4 The administration of a member country may, in addition, reserve the right to require the reply coupons and the items to be prepaid in exchange for those reply coupons to be presented at the same time.

Chapter 2

Special services

Article 16

Registered items

- 1 Letter-post items may be sent as registered items.
- 2 The charge on registered items shall be paid in advance. It shall be made up of the postage charge, according to the **classification system** and category of item, and of a fixed registration charge of 1.31 SDR at most. For each M bag, administrations shall collect, instead of the charge per item, a bulk charge not exceeding five times the charge per item.
- 3 In cases where exceptional security measures are required, administrations may collect from the sender or from the addressee, in addition to the charge mentioned under 2, the special charges provided for by their internal legislation.
- 4 Postal administrations prepared to cover risks of force majeure shall be authorized to collect a special charge of 0.13 SDR at most for each registered item.

Article 17

Recorded delivery items

- 1 Letter-post items may be sent by the recorded delivery items service in relations between administrations which agree to provide this service.
- 2 The charge on recorded delivery items shall be paid in advance. It shall be made up of the postage charge, according to the **classification system** and category of item, and of the recorded delivery charge fixed by the administration of origin. This charge shall be less than the registration charge.

Article 18

Insured items

- 1 **Priority and non-priority items** and letters containing securities, valuable documents or articles shall be called "insured items" and may be exchanged with insurance of the contents for the value declared by the sender. This exchange shall be restricted to those member countries whose postal administrations have declared their willingness to admit such items, whether reciprocally or in one direction only.
- 2 In principle, the amount of the insured value shall be unlimited. Every administration may limit the insured value, so far as it is concerned, to an amount which may not be less than 4000 SDR. However, the limit of insured value adopted in the internal service shall be applicable if it is less than that amount.
- 3 The charge on insured items shall be paid in advance. It shall be made up of the ordinary postage charge, the fixed registration charge laid down in article 16.2 and an insurance charge.
- 4 Instead of the fixed registration charge, postal administrations may collect the corresponding charge of their internal service or, exceptionally, a charge of 3.27 SDR at most.

5 The insurance charge shall be at most 0.33 SDR for each 65.34 SDR of insured value or fraction thereof, or 0.5 percent of the scale of the insured value. This charge shall apply whatever the country of destination, even in countries which undertake to cover risks of force majeure.

6 In cases where exceptional security measures are required, administrations may collect from the sender or from the addressee, in addition to the charges mentioned under 3, 4 and 5, the special charges provided for by their internal legislation.

Article 19

Express items

1 At the sender's request, letter-post items for countries where the administration performs the service shall be delivered by special messenger as soon as possible after their arrival at the delivery office. Any administration shall have the right to confine this service to priority items, to airmail items and, when this is the only means used between two administrations, to surface LC items. Express items may be dealt with in a different manner as long as the overall level of the service provided to the addressee is at least equal to that which would have been obtained through special messenger delivery.

2 If the items arrive at the delivery office after the last routine delivery, they shall be delivered by special messenger on the same day and under the same conditions as apply internally, in those countries which provide this facility.

3 Administrations which have various streams of letter mail shall enter express items into the fastest internal letters stream upon their arrival at the inward office of exchange and thereafter handle these items in the speediest manner possible.

4 Express items shall be subject, in addition to the postage, to a charge which may not be less than the amount of postage prepayable on an unregistered priority/non-priority item, as the case may be, or on an unregistered single rate letter and not more than 1.63 SDR. For each M bag, administrations shall collect, instead of the charge per item, a bulk charge not exceeding five times the charge per item. This charge shall be paid in full in advance.

5 When express delivery involves special demands, an additional charge may be collected in accordance with the provisions relating to items of the same kind in the internal service.

6 If the regulations of the administration of destination permit, addressees may ask the delivery office for express delivery immediately on arrival of items which are intended for them. In that case the administration of destination shall be authorized to collect, on delivery, the charge that applies in its internal service.

Article 20

Advice of delivery

1 The sender of a registered item, a recorded delivery item or an insured item may apply for an advice of delivery at the time of posting by paying a charge of 0.98 SDR at most. This advice of delivery shall be returned to him by the quickest route (air or surface).

2 When the sender inquires about an advice of delivery which he has not received within a normal period, a second charge shall not be collected.

Article 21**Delivery to the addressee in person**

1 At the sender's request, and in the service between those administrations which have given their consent, registered items, recorded delivery items and insured items shall be delivered to the addressee in person. Administrations may agree to allow this option only for such items accompanied by an advice of delivery. In all cases, the sender shall pay a charge for delivery to the addressee in person of 0.16 SDR at most.

Article 22**Items for delivery free of charges and fees**

1 In the service between postal administrations which have notified their agreement to that effect senders may, by means of a previous declaration at the office of origin, undertake to pay the whole of the charges and fees to which the items are subject on delivery. So long as an item has not been delivered to the addressee, the sender may ask after posting that the item be delivered free of charges and fees.

2 In the cases provided for in paragraph 1, senders shall undertake to pay the amounts which may be claimed by the office of destination. If necessary, they shall make a provisional payment.

3 The administration of origin shall collect from the sender a charge of 0.98 SDR at most which it shall retain as payment for services rendered in the country of origin.

4 In the case of a request made after posting, the administration of origin shall also collect an additional charge not exceeding 1.31 SDR per request. If the request is to be forwarded by telecommunications, the sender shall pay in addition the corresponding charge.

5 The administration of destination shall be authorized to collect on each item a commission charge not exceeding 0.98 SDR. This charge shall be independent of the presentation-to-Customs charge. It shall be collected from the sender on behalf of the administration of destination.

6 Every administration may restrict to registered items and insured items the service of delivery free of charges and fees.

Article 23**International business reply service**

1 Administrations may agree with each other to participate in an optional international business reply service (IBRS).

2 Administrations which operate this service shall comply with the provisions laid down in the Detailed Regulations.

3 Two administrations may, nevertheless, agree bilaterally on another system to be applied between themselves.

4 Administrations may establish a compensation system that takes account of the costs borne.

Article 24

Perishable biological substances. Radioactive materials

1 Perishable biological substances and radioactive materials made up and packed in accordance with the respective provisions of the Detailed Regulations shall be subject to the tariff for priority items or to the tariff for letters and to registration. Their admission shall be restricted to those member countries whose postal administrations have declared their willingness to admit such items, whether reciprocally or in one direction only. Such substances shall be forwarded by the quickest route, normally by air, subject to payment of the corresponding air surcharges.

2 Furthermore, perishable biological substances may be exchanged only between officially recognized qualified laboratories, while radioactive materials may be posted only by duly authorized senders.

Chapter 3

Special provisions

Article 25

Posting abroad of letter-post items

1 A member country shall not be bound to forward or deliver to the addressee letter-post items which senders residing in its territory post or cause to be posted in a foreign country with the object of profiting by the more favourable rate conditions there.

2 The provisions set out under 1 shall be applied without distinction both to letter-post items made up in the sender's country of residence and then carried across the frontier and to letter-post items made up in a foreign country.

3 The administration of destination may claim from the sender and, failing this, from the administration of posting, payment of the internal rates. If neither the sender nor the administration of posting agrees to pay these rates within a time limit set by the administration of destination, the latter may either return the items to the administration of posting and shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of the redirection costs, or handle them in accordance with its own legislation.

4 A member country shall not be bound to forward or deliver to the addressees letter-post items which senders post or cause to be posted in large quantities in a country other than the country where they reside, without receiving appropriate remuneration. The administration of destination may claim from the administration of posting payment commensurate with the costs incurred and which may not exceed the higher of the following two amounts: either 80 percent of the domestic tariff for equivalent items, or 0.14 SDR per item plus 1 SDR per kilogramme. If the administration of posting does not agree to pay the amount claimed within a time limit set by the administration of destination, the administration of destination may either return the items to the administration of posting and shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of the redirection costs, or handle them in accordance with its own legislation.

Article 26

Items not admitted. Prohibitions

1 Items not fulfilling the conditions laid down in the Convention and its Detailed Regulations shall not be admitted.

2 Items other than insured items may not contain coin, bank notes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles. However, if the internal legislation of the countries of origin and destination permits this, such articles may be sent in a closed envelope as registered items.

3 Letters may not contain documents having the character of current and personal correspondence exchanged between persons other than the sender and the addressee or persons living with them. If the administration of the country of origin or destination discovers the presence of such documents, it shall deal with them according to its legislation.

4 Except as otherwise provided in the Detailed Regulations, printed papers and literature for the blind:

- 4.1 shall not bear any inscription or contain any document having the character of current and personal correspondence;
- 4.2 shall not contain any postage stamp or form of prepayment, whether cancelled or not, or any paper representing a monetary value.

5 The insertion in letter-post items of the following articles shall be prohibited:

- 5.1 narcotics and psychotropic substances;
- 5.2 explosive, flammable or other dangerous substances; nevertheless, the perishable biological substances and radioactive substances mentioned in article 24 shall not come within this prohibition;
- 5.3 obscene or immoral articles;
- 5.4 articles of which the importation and circulation are prohibited in the country of destination.

6 The insertion of live animals in letter-post items shall be prohibited.

6.1 However, the following shall be admitted in letter-post items other than insured items:

- 6.1.1 bees, leeches and silk-worms;
- 6.1.2 parasites and destroyers of noxious insects intended for the control of those insects and exchanged between officially recognized institutions.

7 The treatment of items wrongly admitted is set out in the Detailed Regulations. Nevertheless, items containing articles mentioned in 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 shall in no circumstances be forwarded to their destination, delivered to the addressees or returned to origin.

Article 27

Redirection

1 If an addressee changes his address, letter-post items shall be reforwarded to him forthwith, under the conditions prescribed in the internal service.

2 Items shall not however be redirected:

- 2.1 if the sender has forbidden redirection by means of a note on the address side in a language known in the country of destination;
- 2.2 if they bear in addition to the addressee's address the expression "or occupant".

3 Administrations which collect a charge for requests for redirection in their internal services shall be authorized to collect this same charge in the international service.

4 Apart from the exceptions provided for in the Detailed Regulations, no additional charge shall be collected for letter-post items redirected from country to country. However, administrations which collect a charge for redirection of items in their internal service shall be authorized to collect this same charge on the international mail redirected within their own countries.

5 The conditions for redirection are set out in the Detailed Regulations.

Article 28

Undeliverable items

1 Items which it has not proved possible to deliver to the addressees for whatever reason shall be considered as undeliverable items.

2 The return of undeliverable items as well as their period of retention are governed by the Detailed Regulations.

3 Apart from the exceptions provided for in the Detailed Regulations, no additional charge shall be collected for undeliverable items returned to the country of origin. However, administrations which collect a charge for return of items in their internal service shall be authorized to collect this same charge on the international mail returned to them.

Article 29

Withdrawal from the post. Alteration or correction of address at the sender's request

1 The sender of a letter-post item may have it withdrawn from the post, or have its address altered or corrected, so long as the item:

- 1.1 has not been delivered to the addressee;
- 1.2 has not been confiscated or destroyed by the competent authorities because of infringement of article 26;
- 1.3 has not been seized by virtue of the legislation of the country of destination.

2 If its legislation permits, each administration shall be bound to accept requests for withdrawal from the post or alteration or correction of the address in respect of any letter-post item posted in the service of other administrations.

3 The sender shall pay, for each request, a special charge of 1.31 SDR at most.

4 The request shall be forwarded by post or by telecommunication at the sender's expense. The forwarding conditions and the provisions relating to the use of telecommunications are set out in the Detailed Regulations.

5 The charges prescribed under 3 and 4 shall be levied only once for each request for withdrawal from the post or alteration or correction of address involving several items posted at the same time, at the same office, by the same sender to the same addressee.

Article 30

Inquiries

1 Inquiries shall be entertained within a period of a year from the day after that on which the item was posted.

2 Within this timespan, inquiries shall be accepted as soon as the problem is reported by the sender or the addressee. However, where a sender's inquiry concerns an undelivered item and the anticipated transmission time has not expired, the sender should be informed of this transmission time.

3 Each administration shall be bound to accept inquiries relating to any item posted in the service of another administration.

4 Inquiries shall be free of charge. However, if a request is made for transmission by telecommunications or by EMS, the additional costs shall, in principle, be borne by the person making the request. The relevant provisions are set out in the Detailed Regulations.

Chapter 4

Customs matters

Article 31

Customs control

1 The postal administrations of the countries of origin and destination shall be authorized to submit letter-post items to customs control, according to the legislation of those countries.

Article 32

Presentation-to-Customs charge

1 Items submitted to customs control in the country of origin or of destination, as the case may be, may be subjected to a special charge of 2.61 SDR at most as a postal charge. For each M bag, the special charge may be up to 3.27 SDR at most. This charge shall only be collected for the submission to Customs and customs clearance of items which have attracted customs charges or any other similar charge.

Article 33

Customs duty and other fees

1 Postal administrations shall be authorized to collect from the senders or addressees of items, as the case may be, the customs duty and all other fees which may be due.

Chapter 5

Liability

Article 34

Liability of postal administrations. Indemnities

1 General

1.1 Except for the cases provided for in article 35, postal administrations shall be liable for:

1.1.1 the loss of, theft from or damage to registered items and insured items;

1.1.2 the loss of recorded delivery items.

1.2 Postal administrations may undertake to cover risks arising from a case of force majeure.

2 Registered items

2.1 The sender of a registered item shall be entitled to an indemnity if his item is lost.

2.1.1 The indemnity for the loss of a registered item shall amount to 30 SDR, including the cost of the charges paid on posting the item.

2.1.2 The indemnity for the loss of a registered M bag amounts to 150 SDR, including the cost of the charges paid on posting the item.

2.2 The sender of a registered item shall be entitled to an indemnity if the contents of his item are rifled or damaged. However, the packing must have been recognized as being sufficient to guarantee the contents effectively against accidental risks of theft or damage.

2.2.1 The indemnity for a rifled or damaged registered item shall correspond, in principle, to the actual value of the theft or damage. It may, however, in no case exceed the amounts fixed under 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. Consequential losses or loss of profits shall not be taken into account.

3 Recorded delivery items

3.1 If a recorded delivery item is lost, the sender shall be entitled to refund of the charges paid.

3.2 The sender shall also be entitled to a refund of the charges paid in the event of total theft of or total damage to the contents. However, the packing must have been recognized as being sufficient to guarantee the contents effectively against accidental risks of theft or damage.

4 Insured items

4.1 In the event of theft from or damage to an insured item, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the actual amount of the loss, theft or damage. Consequential losses or loss of profits shall not be taken into consideration. However, this indemnity may in no case exceed the amount of the insured value in SDRs.

4.2 The indemnity shall be calculated according to the current price, converted into SDRs, of articles of value of the same kind at the place and time at which they were accepted for conveyance. Failing a current price, the indemnity shall be calculated according to the ordinary value of articles whose value is assessed on the same bases.

4.3 When an indemnity is due for the loss of, total theft from or total damage to an insured item, the sender, or the addressee, as the case may be, shall also be entitled to repayment of the charges and fees paid. However, the insurance charge shall in no case be repaid; it shall be retained by the administration of origin.

5 Notwithstanding the provisions set out under 2.1 and 4.1, the addressee shall be entitled to the indemnity after delivery of a rifled or damaged registered item or insured item.

6 The administration of origin shall have the option of paying senders in its country the indemnities prescribed by its internal legislation for registered items, provided that they are not lower than those laid down in 2.1. The same shall apply to the administration of destination when the indemnity is paid to the addressee. However, the amounts laid down in 2.1 shall remain applicable:

- 6.1 in the event of recourse against the administration liable; or
- 6.2 if the sender waives his rights in favour of the addressee or vice versa.

Article 35

Non-liability of postal administrations

1 Postal administrations shall cease to be liable for registered items, recorded delivery items and insured items which they have delivered according to the conditions laid down in their regulations for items of the same kind. Liability shall, however, be maintained:

- 1.1 when theft or damage is discovered either prior to or at the time of delivery of the item;
- 1.2 when, internal regulations permitting, the addressee, or the sender if it is returned to origin, makes reservations on taking delivery of a rifled or damaged item;
- 1.3 when, internal regulations permitting, the registered item was delivered to a private mail-box and, in the course of the inquiry, the addressee declares that he did not receive the item;
- 1.4 when the addressee or, in the case of return to origin, the sender of an insured item, although having given a proper discharge, notifies the delivery administration without delay that he has found theft or damage. He shall furnish proof that such theft or damage did not occur after delivery.

2 Postal administrations shall not be liable:

- 2.1 in cases of force majeure, subject to article 34.1.2;
- 2.2 when they cannot account for items owing to the destruction of official records by force majeure, provided that proof of their liability has not been otherwise produced;
- 2.3 when such loss, theft or damage has been caused by the fault or negligence of the sender or arises from the nature of the contents;
- 2.4 in the case of items whose contents fall within the prohibitions specified in article 26, in so far as these items have been confiscated or destroyed by the competent authority because of their contents;
- 2.5 when the items have been seized under the legislation of the country of destination, as notified by the administration of that country;
- 2.6 in the case of insured items which have been fraudulently insured for a sum greater than the actual value of the contents;
- 2.7 when the sender has made no inquiry within one year from the day after that on which the item was posted.

3 Postal administrations shall accept no liability for customs declarations in whatever form these are made or for decisions taken by the Customs on examination of items submitted to customs control.

Article 36

Sender's liability

- 1 The sender of a letter-post item shall be liable for any damage caused to other postal items as a result of the dispatch of articles not acceptable for conveyance or the non-observance of the conditions of acceptance.
- 2 The sender shall be liable within the same limits as postal administrations.
- 3 The sender shall remain liable even if the office of posting accepts such an item.
- 4 The sender shall not be liable if there has been fault or negligence on the part of administrations or carriers.

Article 37

Payment of indemnity

- 1 Subject to the right of recourse against the administration which is liable, the obligation to pay the indemnity shall rest either with the administration of origin or with the administration of destination. The obligation to refund the charges for recorded delivery items shall rest with the administration of origin.
- 2 The sender may waive his rights to the indemnity in favour of the addressee. Conversely, the addressee may waive his rights in favour of the sender. The sender or the addressee may authorize a third party to receive the indemnity if internal legislation allows this.
- 3 The administration of origin or destination, as the case may be, shall be authorized to indemnify the rightful claimant on behalf of the administration which, having participated in the conveyance and having been duly informed, has allowed **two** months to pass without finally settling the matter, or without having reported:
 - 3.1 that the damage appeared to be due to a case of force majeure;
 - 3.2 that the item had been detained, confiscated or destroyed by the competent authority because of its contents or seized under the legislation of the country of destination.
- 4 The administration of origin or destination, as the case may be, shall be authorized to indemnify the rightful claimant in cases where the inquiry form is not properly completed and has to be returned for additional information, thereby causing the time limit set in 3 to be exceeded.

Article 38

Possible recovery of the indemnity from the sender or the addressee

- 1 If, after payment of the indemnity, a registered item or an insured **item** or part of the contents previously considered as lost is found, the sender or the addressee, as the case may be, shall be advised that the item is being held at his disposal for a period of three months on repayment of the amount of the indemnity paid. At the same time he shall be asked to whom the item is to be delivered. In the event of refusal or failure to reply within the prescribed period, the same approach shall be made to the addressee or the sender as the case may be.
- 2 If the sender and the addressee refuse to take delivery of the item, it shall become the property of the administration or, where appropriate, administrations which bore the loss.

3 In the case of subsequent discovery of an insured item the contents of which are found to be of less value than the amount of the indemnity paid, the sender shall repay the amount of this indemnity against return of the item, without prejudice to the consequences of fraudulent insurance.

Chapter 6

Electronic mail

Article 39

General provisions

- 1 Administrations may agree with each other to participate in electronic mail services.
- 2 Electronic mail is a postal service which uses telecommunications for transmitting within seconds messages true to the original posted by the sender in either a physical or an electronic form for delivery to the addressee in a physical or electronic form. In the case of physical delivery, the information is generally transmitted by electronic means for the longest possible part of the way and reproduced in physical form as near as possible to the addressee. Physical messages are delivered in an envelope to the addressee as a letter-post item.
- 3 The tariffs applicable to electronic mail are fixed by administrations, taking costs and market requirements into account.

Article 40

Facsimile-based services

- 1 The bureauxfax range of services permits the transmission of texts and illustrations true to the original by facsimile.

Article 41

Text-based services

- 1 The range of text-based services permits the transmission of texts and illustrations produced by means of data-processing equipment (PC, mainframe computer).